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WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE

Preparatory Committee
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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

# REVIEW OF REPORTS, STUDIES AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION FOR THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE AND THE WORLD CONFERENCE

## Contribution*/ submitted by the Legion of Good Will

The secretariat has received the following contribution which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[11 March 2001]

*/ This contribution is issued, unedited, as received from the submitting non-governmental organization.

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Thematic Issue: Measures of prevention, education and protection aimed at the eradication of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance at the national, regional and international levels.

The Legiao da Boa Vontade (Legion of Good Will), a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, brings to the attention of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, XENOPHOBIA AND RELATED INTOLERANCE, the relevant principles and common goals of achievement for all people and nations, as well as all individuals, regarding the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, substantively Articles 1, 2, 4 and 7 which are very incisive that all people are born free and equal, without discrimination of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, politics or any other condition. The General Assembly has designated three decades for action to combat racism and racial discrimination and to ensure support to people struggling for racial equality. Since 1973 we have seen that some progress has been achieved, but facts show us that much more needs to be done to eradicate the violence of discrimination among Human Beings. As a contribution to the preparation for THE WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST RACISM, the Legion of Good Will reaffirms the urgency with which Member States, in their capacity, on national and international levels, must support Free Basic Education to the children of their respective countries in Public Schools. Free Education, however, is not enough. Basic Educational guidelines must be grounded on a philosophy of Ecumenical Spirituality.

The President of the Legion of Good Will, José de Paiva Netto, launched the Pedagogy of Ecumenical Citizen over two decades ago based on concrete experience that amounts currently to 51 years. It is critical to emphasize that discrimination trends are eliminated when common principles such as Love, Peace, Understanding, Tolerance and Compassion are exemplified by educators, soon enough in children's lives. Practical application of such philosophy, that does not imply any kind of religious bond, free of any kind of prejudices and taboos, is the most effective measure of prevention and protection aimed at the eradication of racism and any other type of discrimination.
It is obvious but relevant to stress that the child of today is the adult of tomorrow. If we start to educate our children's hearts and minds right now, based on the culture of unconditional Love, no remedies will be necessary for victims of racism and discrimination. The role of Free Public Education is fundamental in this process. Someone may think that we are approaching the issue in a mere philosophical way, but History carries evidences that mentalities determine the systems we live in.

Very apropos, the UN Secretary-General said on the occasion of the observance of the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on March 21, 1999: "Ignorance and prejudice are the handmaidens of propaganda...Our mission, therefore, is to confront ignorance with knowledge, bigotry with tolerance, and isolation with the outstretched hand of generosity. Racism can, will and must be defeated."

The Legion of Good Will, as a genuine Latin American NGO, headquartered in Brazil, with Branches in Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia, Portugal and USA, has been offering,

thanks to the generosity of the People that support its efforts: "Education and Culture, Health and Work with Spirituality." Under this slogan, the Legion provides, according to its outreach, free equal education for all. Its efforts go beyond with community centers for under-privileged families, Women's Health Care, Job Training for Youth, always without any distinction of Race, Color, Religion, or any kind of discrimination. Thus what affirms Mr. Paiva Netto: "Racial mixture of the World is unavoidable. Since the *monera*, who's not racially mixed in this Planet? There is Only One Race, the Universal Race of God's Children. However, we can not transform a country if we do not really lay our attention on the basis of instruction and education with Spirituality, on the mental and physical health of the next generations. They are the ones who will fatally continue to influence our destinies. If it is difficult to re-educate Society, then let us start now! Against the globalization of indifference and discrimination it is utterly urgent to raise the Ecumenism of Solidarity, because its roots do not know any kind of social, ideological, ethical and religious prejudice and taboo. The Ecumenism of Solidarity has only one purpose: The Human Being"

We close our statement by congratulating the UN for the holding of such an important Conference in Durban/South Africa - 2001. We take the opportunity to offer the United Nations, the Legion of Good Will's educational TV Network in Brazil to convey the progresses against racism made by the UN initiatives not only during the Conference, but on a permanent basis.